



## Whether Common or Not

By WILL M. MAUPIN.

### At the Circus

The circusses grow bigger, if you measure them by feet,  
Or by the acts that occupy each ring;  
They've got the little one-ring show knocked out and badly beat  
If size and glitter count for anything.  
I rather hate the notion, now I'm getting on in years,  
Of going out to see the three-ring show;  
But, bless their hearts, the kiddies have such fun when it appears  
I've simply got to take the bunch and go.

I seldom see the artists on the slack rope or trapeze,  
Or watch the clowns in their buffoonery.  
I sit and watch the kiddies and enjoy their ecstasies—  
The fun they have is show enough for me.  
The lemonade is weaker than it was long years ago;  
The goober peas don't taste one-half so fine.  
But, bless 'em, how the kiddies can consume 'em at the show—  
It's show enough to fill those kids o' mine.

To me the clowns are mournful when they spring their circus "fun,"  
But when I hear the kiddies shriek with glee,  
I double up with laughter till the fun-tears fairly run—  
The joy they feel is show enough for me.  
I'm busy grabbing to them lest they wriggle off the seats;  
It keeps me digging up for lemonade;  
Their joy is more worth watching than the acrobatic feats,  
And no matter what it costs I'm well repaid.

Five happy kiddies shrieking in a laughing storm of joy;  
Five faces shining like the mid-day sun.  
To me it's perfect happiness that nothing can alloy  
To see the kiddies having so much fun.  
I don't enjoy the circus like I did in days gone by,  
Although they've grown much larger, that I know;  
I'd rather loaf in comfort, but you better bet that I  
Will gather up my bunch o' kids and go.

### Is It Always Thus?

Frankly admitting that he was larruped about as often as the most of 'em when he was a lad in school, the Architect recalls one basting that he did not deserve. It was the day Asa White slipped into my hand a rude caricature of William Porter, the teacher. It was so ludicrous that I laughed out loud.

Now I submit that no fun loving boy should be whipped for laughing at something funny, but Porter thought otherwise. He asked me what made me laugh, and of course I refused to tell, knowing that it would get Asa into trouble. I ditched the caricature and my persistent refusal to explain the cause of my laughter impelled Porter to haul me to the front of the room and give me a hiding that was the real

thing, no feeble imitation. From that day on there was open hostility between us, although I was careful not to give him an excuse for lambasting me again. But I vowed then and there that when I grew big enough I would give William Porter the soundest thrashing a man ever received, and I meant it. The school year closed and William Porter took his departure, but not until I told him in boyish language—always emphatic—that some day I would cave in his features for him.

That was at least thirty-five years ago. Five years ago this summer I happened to be visiting in a little Oklahoma town where a chautauqua was in session, and the manager, an old friend from Nebraska, asked me to recite a few of my own humble little verses one evening, taking the place on the program allotted to a real attraction that failed to materialize. I consented, and performed to the best of my limited ability. After the evening program was concluded a number of people came to the front to shake my hand and utter the usual commonplaces.

"Well, Will, shall we go outside the tent while you give me that long delayed thrashing?"

I turned, and standing by the side of me was a tall, grayhaired and smiling gentleman with outstretched hand. I took the hand, puzzling my brain in an effort to grasp the meaning of the question. Suddenly it dawned upon me.

"This is Mr. Porter, isn't it?"

"Yes, and I'm ready, my boy."

Now, I had meant it from the bottom of my heart when I told William Porter thirty-five years ago that some day I would jump onto him and beat him up proper. Maybe time had softened my desire for revenge. Maybe I had outgrown the desire to "get even." I say "maybe." I do not know as to that, but anyhow I looked at the smiling old gentleman by my side and didn't feel the least impulse to smite him. He was square-shouldered, straight as an arrow, and looked quite as able to hand it to me then as he was amply able and so demonstrated thirty-five years before. I presume my face flushed a little. I know I stammered a bit. But I finally managed to say:

"I guess I'll postpone it a few years longer. There's no immediate rush, after having waited so long." And that night I spent at the home of William Porter, talking with him and his good wife until the gray streaks of dawn appeared in the east. I told him what made me laugh that day, whereupon he dryly remarked that he had a notion to give me another one for not having let him see the picture Asa White drew.

I wonder how many boys have threatened to "lick the teacher" some day, and then in later years bumped up against the fact that teacher continued still to be the better man, physically as well as otherwise?

### Sure

A good friend in Arkansas rather objects to "Kiddies Six" as a title for the Architect's forthcoming book of verse.

"If your children are kids what are you?" asks this critical friend.

Well, Dad has been "the goat" a long while. But, seriously, I know of no sweeter term of endearment than "kiddies." It's a good word,

too. It is in common use in England, where the home-loving English workman always refers to his little ones as "kiddies." No, it isn't slang; it is a good old English word of endearment.

### Queer

"I can not understand how Bum-merly takes so much interest in politics."

"What is there strange about that?"

"Why, taking interest when he has no principle involved."

### Brain Leaks

Home is where the heart is.

A heart full of hope means a life full of joy.

Love makes the roughest road smooth.

The man who wears a wig deceives nobody but himself.

Being a "good fellow" has put many a man to the bad.

The bitter partisan seldom cuts much figure in reform politics.

The funniest men we know are those who take themselves so seriously.

Character is what you have; reputation is what people think you have.

The man who doesn't think well of himself is thought well of by nobody.

Every time we see the iceman's scales we are reminded of a political platform.

A lot of the "good times" we had when a boy look mighty foolish viewed in retrospect.

A lot of men think up a hundred excuses far easier than they can think up one reason.

We are always ready to accept a dinner invitation from the housewife who "puts up" her own fruit.

The fellow with a beautiful curl in his moustache usually has few convulsions in his cerebellum.

Heaven is not reached by cutting across lots. You will have to travel around by the foot of the cross.

Opportunity often knocks just when the man called is complaining so loudly he couldn't hear it thunder.

Every time we read of an American heiress having trouble with the titled husband she married, we manage to refrain from shedding any tears of sympathy.

### A PERSONAL WORD

My forthcoming book of verse, "Kiddies Six," is in press. I hope to have it ready for delivery not later than September 1. In the meantime the Little Woman would like to enter orders for about 250 more. The price will be one dollar. Send your order now, and when the book is ready the Little Woman will notify you; then you may send the dollar. "Kiddies Six" will contain not less than two hundred pages, will be handsomely printed on good paper and bound in cloth. If I have written any verses worth while, "Kiddies Six" will contain the best of them.

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of hundreds of kindly letters—letters that are worth more to me than I can tell. If I make enough money from the sale of "Kiddies Six" to enable me to live a life of leisure hereafter, I will make it a point to answer every one of those letters personally. Sincerely yours,

WILL M. MAUPIN.

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